

ALC 63
CAMEROON

WRITINGS

"AS A CHILD I WAS A TOMBOY..."

[17p.]

[1986?]]

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CAMERON

As a child I was a
tomboy...

CHILD I WAS A TOMBOY...

[17p.]

[1986?]

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As a child I was a
tomboy...

A CHILD I WAS A TOMBOY...

[17p.]

[1986?]

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As a child I was a tomboy ~~but~~, not a
butch tomboy but quite a sensitive one ~~but~~ yet
By the time I was five, I already knew
how to fire a small pistol, and later I
learned to shoot a 32, a shot gun,
a 22, a four 10, a 30.06 and I
was an excellent shot. much to the surprise of my grandparents
My grand parents were often concerned that
my sensitivity would make life overwhelming
for me, that I could not handle
life's harshness. They wanted me to
be tougher however my grandfather
always treated me with gentleness. I
was never physically punished by

As a child I was a
tomboy...

my grandparents although I was scolded a few times by my grandmother on those rare occasions when I was too rowdy.

I was always devastated by her words; She never scolded me in English and our Lakota language is an efficient language.

Despite my grandparents' concerns, I think I've managed to handle the rough episodes in my life and learn the lessons of those negative situations.

The self-confidence I now have about how I go about in the world is an internal status ^{inner} that has taken me many years of painful struggle

CHILD: WAS A TOMBOY...

[7p.]

[1986?]

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to achieve,

My child, my lover and I have
what I consider to be good family
and interpersonal dynamics. There is a
relative coziness about our ^{family} life but
it does require ~~and~~ almost daily attention
to maintain. An interracial lesbian
couple raising a ~~young~~ ^{young} boy is not
without its stresses.

As a parent I ~~have~~ ^{often} become obsessed
with ^{the} ~~violence~~ effects of violence on
my child, whether it's through a
fleeting glimpse on a video, or from
Rhys seeing ~~an~~ ^{adult} ~~parent~~ ^y ~~he~~ striking

As a Child & Adult
Tomboy...

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As a child of whose
tomboy...

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their children. Violence is inescapable.

My son Rhys is 6. ~~to~~ By the time

I was 6, ~~when I was 6, I was~~ ~~with a~~ ~~fire~~ ~~at~~ ~~weapon~~

I witnessed someone getting killed ^{2nd}

from a bullet to his back. The

image was stark; it happened at

night. ~~and since then I have never~~ ~~the police were chasing an~~ ~~escaped prisoner down the country road. and~~ ~~felt safe at night.~~

~~used a spotlight~~

Their spotlight revealed a man

running toward the creek where the trees

would have sheltered him but instead

there was a loud pop from a rifle. Since

then I have never left safe at

night.

As a child of Native
tomboy...

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The activity of physical violence was an integral part of my life on ~~an~~ the reservation, not within my immediate family unit, but on the reservation and off the reservation.

The racial hatred between the whites and Indians was thick. Any encounter, even the simple act of walking past one another, could break into racial epithets or ~~the meeting of flesh in the form of fists,~~ physical violence

There is a form of ~~psychic~~ psychological violence that is particularly Indian. That is, as you grow up on the reservation

As a child of Native
tomboy...

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you see young people die from different
methods of violence, then there is the
reinforcement of ~~being told~~ the statistic
that the average life span for a Native
American is 42. I ~~literally~~ wept
when I turned 30, I never
believed it was my destiny as an Indian
to be 30 yrs. old. The celebration of
turning 40 in seven years won't be as
sweet or maybe bittersweet as when I
turn 43. 43, to be Native American
and ^a lesbian; That will be an
accomplishment.

As a Child I was a
tomboy...

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To be Indian, to be lesbian, what does
that mean in relationship to violence.

I wanted to share a little bit of my
background because whether as the
battered or the batterers or the observers,
Violence has reason, has history.

For a couple of years, I was a
very angry person, just really tired
of living in an unjust world, maybe even
angry that when my friends talked about
Annette and the Mickey Mouse Club, I
couldn't relate because we did not
have television until I was 7.

One of the words which a former

As a child of color
tomboy...

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friend used to describe me during my
angry years was that I was hostile. And
in fact every time she said that I
indeed felt more hostile. A hostile
Indian was not an image I particularly
cared for. It is after all a racist image.
The image that people of color, third
world people are bad, mean, hostile
violent. Lesbians of color are more
violent than white lesbians, it's in
our genes like latins are quick to
temper, and Indians are quiet and
passive.

To be Indian and lesbian meant for

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me that my coming out was an act of
rage, an act of self-hatred, an act
borne out of being in love with the
white heterosexual vista worker on
my reservation, an act of attempted
suicide.

I loved her and hated her
at the same time. I was taught
very early that white people were
loud, crude, mannerless, ugly people
who had absolutely no respect
for humans or animals. It was
therefore quite a shock to find this
white woman who was as sensitive as

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me, and a writer, a photographer as I was
dreaming of becoming.

It was from this relationship that I first
confronted
~~experienced~~ the issue of power between
lovers. ~~The~~ The times that I've
experienced violence or the potential for violence
in ~~my~~ relationship with my lovers, power issues
were
~~was~~ the trigger. Whether ~~power~~ the power
imbalance was racialized or drawn along class
lines, an act of violence seemed ~~the~~ like
~~the way in which~~ an avenue to reclaiming
my power, however repulsive it felt.

In most of the interracial lesbian/gay couples
I've known (interracial meaning white and non-white)

As a child of white
tomboy...

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there is a common theme to what the white
lovers say about their non-white lovers: ①

They don't talk about their feelings

② they are violent; they are the ones who create
the violence, ~~um~~ they are the ones who are
responsible for the violence.

The options then~~a~~ for the person of color
within that context become very limited.

If they chose to shout back, ~~mean~~ ~~mean~~

~~they~~ ^{receive} ~~image of~~ the communicate at the same

level as the white person, the person^{of} color.

~~they~~ ~~get~~ ~~the~~ ~~racist~~ ~~id~~ fulfills the racist

image as being violent, or if the

person^{of color} choses to be ~~go~~ ^{non} ~~un~~ aggressive then

they become sub human. The ~~p~~ issue of

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power is reduced to the person of color
needing to shut up when they're told or

yell when they're told. And until the

~~issue~~ racism ~~is~~ in those relationships

is struggled with in a meaningful way,

~~then~~ the ^{detrimental} ~~cycle~~ power cycle will continue.

Struggling with our racism should be a

daily part of lives, not something you

deal ^{with} at a workshop on a Saturday morning.

The issue of Racism is very key to ~~almost~~ all of
my relationships, as is heterosexism, homophobia.

They form veneers over my experiences.

Even going to ^{the} movies ~~makes~~ can induce

~~the~~ desire to smash something. The movies

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are of painful heterosexual adolescents
in love, the brat pack in love, or it's
the Big Chill, painful heterosexuals hippies
in love or it's Debra Winger, Glenn Close,
Jeff Bridges, the painful heterosexuals of
the 80's in love. I can't remember
the last movie about painful Indian
lesbians in love.

The best that I do as a Native
American lesbian is I work very hard
to redirect my anger and frustration
through my political work, it's vital
that I feel some sense of power in
my life.

As a child & Native
tomboy...

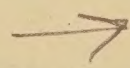
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violence in my home is not acceptable, violence
within my relationships is not acceptable,
violence directed against me because I'm a
Native American is not acceptable violence
directed against me because I'm a lesbian
is not acceptable.

And while I do not condone, accept
institutionalized violence within my life
or within my country I can
understand the necessity of armed struggle
for example in Nicaragua where the people
need to defend themselves against ~~the~~ U.S.
government aggression.



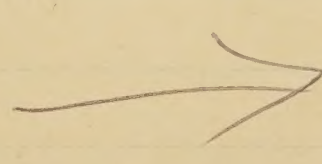
As a child of violence
tomboy...

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Because ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~been~~ I'm able to have^a political
~~analysis~~ perspective about violence, what it
 has meant for my people, for lesbians and
 gay men / for women, I've been able to
~~understand to a long extent~~ extend my
 understanding of violence into a larger
 arena. And that understanding
 is essential to my ability to live
 from day to day, to help my
 child understand the variations of violence
 and ^{its} causes, to help my lover understand
 the repressive conditions of growing up in
 a ~~recessed~~ state of daily racism. And
 while working in it



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Until institutionalized racism, sexism, homophobia
has left our earth, or until I die
I will ~~always~~^{always} have an intimate daily
dialogue with violence, ~~the potential of~~
~~violence~~ ~~there~~



I've worked with the mainstream lesbian/gay community for the past decade

Specifically as a member of the
St AIDS Foundation Board of Directors
an officer of the Alia B. Toklas Lesbian/gay
Democratic Club

on the lesbian/gay Advisory Committee to
the Human Rights Commission

I was appointed by the Mayor to
the Citizens Community on Community Development

I was co-chair of Lesbian Gay Freedom
Day Committee in 1981 and 1985

and ~~at~~ the only thing that

I do now is I serve on the
Steering Committee of Somos Hermanas
which is women's organization, working in
solidarity with the women of Central
American and the Caribbean and they
~~sponsored~~ and was part of their
delegation to Nicaragua this past fall.

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WELTHINS

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